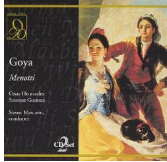


Gian Carlo Menotti – Goya (2005)

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Gian Carlo Menotti – Goya (2005)



Disc 1 1 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Brucia l' annuncio 2 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act one; Ma, dimmi... Non l'hai vista? 3 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Frotte d'angeli in volo 4 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Hai sentito? 5 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Intermezzo 6 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Aspetta qua 7 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Guarda che faccia! 8 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Ora che siamo soli 9 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Ridi se vuoi 10 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act One; Così finisci il ritratto? 11 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Two; No, no, no! 12 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Two; Cosa succede? 13 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Two; Arrivano i reali 14 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Two; Sua Maestà ordina Disc 2 1 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Signora Duchess 2 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Son nemici odio e amor 3 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Oh! Mia povera Cayetana 4 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Oh Dio! 5 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Tu desti vita 6 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Intermezzo 7 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Ecco, il genio 8 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Teresa! Maria! Rosario! Antonia! 9 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Chi e la? Chi e? 10 Goya, opera in 3 acts: Act Three; Tu hai visto com'e crudele l'uomo

Charles IV: Howard Bender Duchessa Alba (Dona Cayetana): Suzanna Guzman Francisco Goya: César Hernández Innkeeper: Daniele Tonini Leocadia: Karen Nickell Maid: Angela Adams Majordomus: Dominic Inferrera Manuel Godoy: Andrew Wentzel Martin Zapater: Boaz Senator Regina di Spaga (Maria Luisa): Penelope Daner Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Westminster Choir Steven Mercurio: Conductor

In Goya, (as in La Loca, written several years before it) Menotti set before himself the difficult task of creating one of the most notoriously treacherous types of opera -- the biographical opera that spans many years of the protagonist's life. The compression of an entire life into a few episodes is rarely effective; the bio-operas that succeed, such as Boris Godunov, Pfitzner's Palestrina, and Hindemith's Mathis der Maler, work because they focus on a single episode or a limited time period in the protagonist's life and have an overriding theme larger than the biography of an individual. La Loca and Goya concern larger-than-life historical figures, spanning the characters' lives from youth to old age, but treat no theme larger than the

individual's biography and are inevitably episodic rather than dramatically cohesive.

Even episodic operas can overcome scenarios that are more like snapshots than integrated narratives (La bohème, for instance) if the music is strong enough. The music in Goya, however, doesn't have enough character or distinctiveness to make the drama come alive. Menotti has written a very grand "Grand Opera" that is relentlessly overwrought musically and dramatically and full of nineteenth century-style Spanish exoticisms. The opera was written as a vehicle for Plácido Domingo, so the composer's desire to employ the emotional bel canto lyricism at which Domingo excels is understandable, but the music sounds generically like Romantic grand opera and has few moments that are truly memorable. Significantly, those moments are often the lightest, such as the Duchess of Alba's wicked joke of dressing her ladies in waiting in copies of the Queen's gown. Menotti's depiction of the beginning of Goya's deafness at the end of the second act is also genuinely effective.

The recording is taken from a live 1991 performance at Spoleto, in a revised version of the score the composer made after the premiere at the Washington Opera five years earlier. The opera is performed in Italian translation. Steven Mercurio leads the Spoleto Festival Orchestra and the Westminster Choir in a spirited performance. Tenor Cesar Hernandez's lyrical intensity and passion amply fill the demanding title role. Sopranos Suzanna Guzmán as the Duchess of Alba and Penelope Daner as the Queen, and baritone Andrew Wentzel as Godoy are his equals in the musical and dramatic vividness of their characterizations. There is some audience and stage noise, but generally the sound is clear, with good balance between the singers and the orchestra. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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